

upon the *will* of the people—They, and they only, can alter or abolish it. Are the rights of men, or of property, understood, or respected by the ignorant? Certainly not,—Or where is the human character the most degraded? We have too many instances, daily before us, to want an answer to this inquiry. And the evil *cries aloud for remedy*.

Will it not follow from the natural operation and effect of the *State's munificence*, as contemplated by the late law of *public instruction*, that the ignorant and poor will be aided and enlightened; that the wise and rich will be valued and protected; and that all the blessings of free government will be understood and appreciated? A good system of Primary Schools, as a nursery of youth, is the universal and effectual means of diffusing knowledge, of promoting industry, and dispensing freely the various benefits of social order and human happiness. Such a system will impart efficient aid and education to many who would otherwise remain in grovelling poverty and hopeless ignorance. "It will diffuse in the quickest and cheapest mode, the greatest stock of useful knowledge" and it may be stated, as a fact, that "no where has common education made any considerable progress without the aid of government." There is unhappily, a "prevailing indifference among the illiterate to the cultivation of the mind—and were it not so, the poor man, if educated, could rarely instruct his children, because his time is necessarily occupied in earning their bread; and the ignorant man, although rich, could not do it, because he himself is untaught." If there be men amongst us, esteemed rich, who would oppose the principle of extending learning to the common people, it must be admitted that such men are either *unfriendly to our form of government*, or *grossly ignorant of their best policy and true interest*, as the very existence of our institutions is based upon that principle; and as in proportion to the amount of property, is the *protection of that interest* to be estimated, so, in the like degree, are *they concerned in the general intelligence of the common people*—Would it, therefore, be wise, or politic, in such a government, to permit the great body of the people to remain illiterate and debased—The proper subjects of wily intrigue and vaulting ambition?—Who will answer this affirmatively? We may hope none; for all must know, that "*ignorance is the bane of liberty*," and *treason is its natural offspring*—Are we not then, bound in duty to our common country, and more particularly to the poor and ignorant, to supply the means of *free instruction* to every child throughout the land—that each may have an